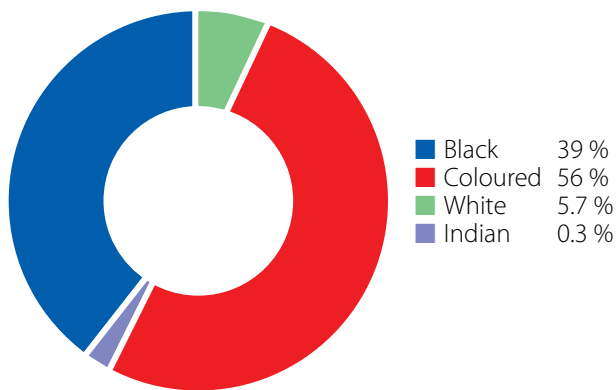


# Employment in the South African deep-sea trawling industry

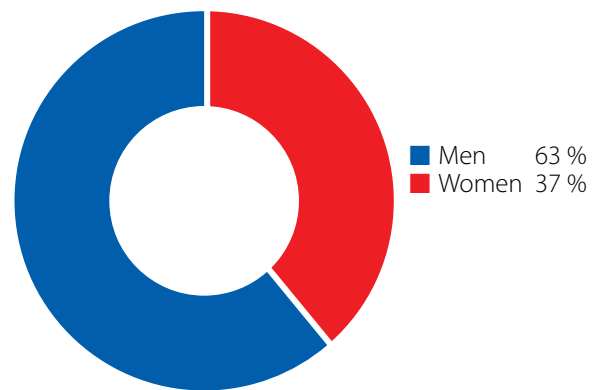
## Direct Employment

A total of 7 050 people are employed by the deep-sea trawling industry, either on fishing vessels, at land-based processing plants or in a range of management, administrative or supportive roles. The racial and gender composition of the workforce is as follows:

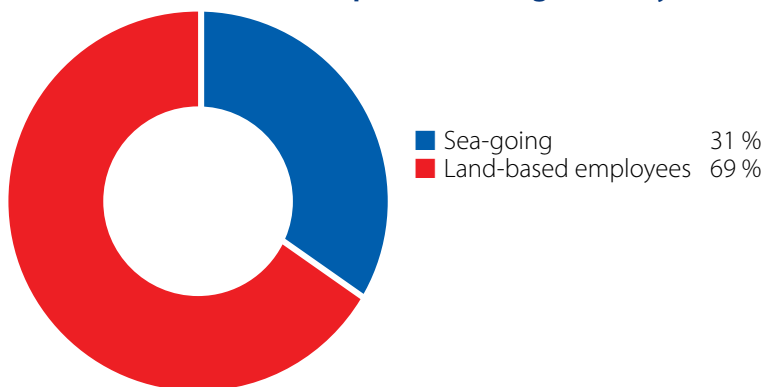
The racial composition of employees in the South African deep-sea trawling industry



The gender composition of employees in the South African deep-sea trawling industry



The breakdown of land-based employees (e.g. factory workers) versus sea-going employees in the South African deep-sea trawling industry



The majority of employees work at land-based processing factories, or in administrative roles, but a significant number of employees work at sea, as crew on fishing vessels. A large percentage of employees at land-based processing facilities are female, many of whom are the sole breadwinners in their families.

## Conditions of employment in the South African deep-sea trawling industry

The hake fishery is a year-round fishery and employees are employed on a full-time, permanent basis with associated employment benefits such as annual leave, retirement, disability and medical benefits. Employees are also offered a variety of training opportunities and there is scope for career progression.

The full spectrum of South African labour law protects workers in the deep-sea trawling industry. However, owing to the unique working conditions that prevail on deep-sea trawlers, a special labour relations framework has been created to protect the rights of sea-going workers

The **Bargaining Council for the Fishing Industry** was registered with the Department of Labour on 14 December 2001. Ever since then, the Bargaining Council has provided a forum for employers and trade unions to meet on an annual basis to negotiate, bargain collectively and consult on matters of mutual interest, including salaries and basic conditions of employment for sea-going employees.

The establishment of the Bargaining Council was a strategic and practical move on the part of employers and trade unions. They realised that neither the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, nor the Merchant Shipping Act, adequately provide for the rights of sea-going workers in the fishing industry and that a sector-specific Bargaining Council was required.

At present, sea-going employees in four South African fisheries sectors are represented at the Bargaining Council for the Fishing Industry. The fisheries are:

- Hake deep-sea bottom trawl
- Hake inshore bottom trawl
- Horse mackerel midwater trawl
- South coast rock lobster

**Each fishery forms a separate chamber of the Bargaining Council and annual negotiations around salaries and conditions of employment are specific to each fishery.**

## The Hake Deep-sea Bottom Trawl Chamber

In the Hake Deep-sea Bottom Trawl Chamber, negotiations are conducted annually between the following parties:

- The South African Fishing Industry Employers Organisation (SAFIEO)
- The Trawler and Line Fishermen’s Union (TALFU)
- The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU)
- The National Certificated Fishing and Allied Workers Union (NCFAWU).

A Collective Agreement, which sets out basic conditions of employment for sea-going workers in the deep-sea trawl fishery, was negotiated in the Bargaining Council and has been in effect since 2 May 2003. The basic conditions include set daily wages for each category of worker; set hours of work and regulated rest and leave periods – including sick leave, annual leave, maternity leave and family responsibility leave.

The Collective Agreement also stipulates that employees with more than 12 months of service with their employers, and who do not belong to an employer medical aid scheme, have the right to be enrolled with the Fishermen’s Medical Aid Fund, with employer and employees sharing the contributions to the fund on an equal basis. Similarly, employees are provided with accidental death and disability insurance. (It is common for companies active in the deep-sea trawling industry to provide pension or provident fund benefits to sea-going employees, but these benefits are provided outside of the scope of the Bargaining Council.)

The Collective Agreement includes agreed procedures for employing and terminating the employment of sea-going workers; agreed guidelines on the right to strike and the rights of employers; and a Code of Good practice.

Amendments are made to the Collective Agreement following the conclusion of annual negotiations and these amendments are signed by the Minister of Labour and published in the Government Gazette. Amendments typically include annual pay increases across every rank of employee.



**Contact:**

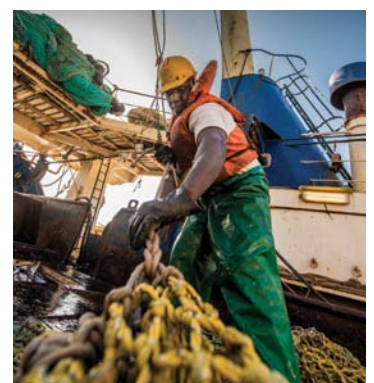
The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association  
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## Indirect employment

A wide range of industries support and render services to the fishing industry. These industries include ship repair, fuel supply, net making, the manufacture of processing equipment and transport, among many others. It is estimated that 100 000 people are employed in these support industries and many of them are dependent for full-time, stable employment generated by the deep-sea trawl fishery.



Of the 7 050 South Africans who work in the deep-sea trawl fishery, about 31% work at sea. The rights of sea-going workers are protected by a special labour relations framework. (Photo courtesy of Sea Harvest.)



Most employees in land-based seafood processing factories are women. (Photo courtesy of I&J.)